

No. [★] 5561.5



PAMPHLETS.

American
Social Science
Assoc.

~ 5561.5

Var. publications.

Please bind as arranged

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY.

1562

CONTENTS.

— 132 —

L 7416

1

C. K. 1318-11

1318-11

*Abbott Lawrence Esq
with the respects of the author*

1
A
SOCIETY

FOR THE SPECIAL STUDY

OF

POLITICAL ECONOMY,

THE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY.

AND

THE SCIENCE OF GOVERNMENT,

PROPOSED BY

A CITIZEN OF BOSTON.

BOSTON:

PRINTED BY ALFRED MUDGE & SON.

No. 21 SCHOOL STREET.

1857.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

Boston, August 1, 1857.

The object of the following remarks is to call attention, once more, to the true import of Smithson's Will, and to propose my native city for its true expounder.

Ever since the Will of this philanthropic citizen of London was made public, I have labored in numerous essays to call attention to *that* which seemed to me its *sole* purpose. That this philanthropic benefactor was a man of common sense, and uncommon benevolence, will be readily admitted; and that, in bequeathing to our honored country his whole fortune (\$500,000), he had some specific object in view. Now, what was that object? It would seem to be the imperative duty of his honored trustees to discover that object, and faithfully to apply this liberal donation to the purpose of the testator. Great public charities have often been misapplied; and we must not be surprised if Congress should have proved itself not infallible in organizing the Smithsonian Institute.

The clause which governs this Will is very brief—intentionally so, perhaps; leaving a flattering latitude to a body which he might well suppose concentrated the wisdom of a great nation, which had a very deep interest in that science which tends most to the welfare and happiness of man, and, without which, every other science fails to establish the reign of justice. If there be doubts on the positive meaning of the Will, its negative meaning will dispel them. Smithson knew well that primary education in America is more generally and generously provided for than in any other part of the world; he knew, also, that the higher branches of knowledge are not less liberally endowed, and that every progressive step taken in the arts and sciences in Europe

soon found their way to this reading and progressive country, and were more cheaply obtained and generally diffused than in the places of their inception: therefore, so wise a man could not think of sending "coals to Newcastle." This is but negative proof, but strong enough to show us that Smithson did not send us a *horn book* to teach us A, B, C, or even sciences well provided for, and which *pay* well for cultivation.

Now, what were the apparent intentions of this good and wise man? What was the intention? Was it not to do in America that which could nowhere else be so freely done, where the fewest inveterate barriers were in the way, where the wisdom of initiating conventions became conspicuous all the world over, where successful experiment was in progress, and had initiated the best government the world has yet seen, and all that was wanted to perfect it, as much as human wisdom can ever hope for, was a concentration of the scattered wisdom which has been sown broadcast for ages — world-wide: throughout Egypt, Greece, Rome, and down to our own times. What a galaxy of saints and philosophers could be assembled for such a mundane and truly catholic purpose: what a focus of light would shine on such an assemblage of wisdom; and, strange as it may seem, in one little obscure place somewhere in Palestine, a short sentence was uttered by a poor man, called the *Golden Rule*, which might prove the never failing cynosure for all legislators and rulers—an infallible test on which the wisdom of Solon, Socrates, Justinian, Descartes, Bacon, and all modern jurists and statesmen, could be tried with unerring confidence; and, if found conforming to that rule, might be pronounced Divine truths.

Now, where is there a more fit place than Boston to collect and critically collate the abundant statistical data within our reach, through history, philosophically written as it now is, in our own country as well as in Europe?

Our free and happy country presents now to the world a *tabula rasa*—a fair and open field, and the only one in which the *forbidden* science could be freely cultivated. The greatest compliment has been paid to our country that was ever paid to a nation. Now shall we prove ourselves worthy of it by using the accompanying bounty for the intended purpose? If Smithson had intended to promote primary education or the sciences generally, (all but one, and that yet unborn,) he would have done better to divide his bounty among our several states; although none, not even the youngest has any need of foreign aid.

These remarks are intended to bring before the public such reasons as may occur to the writer in favor of an Institution which he has had in view for some years; and as supplementary,

if nothing more, to the Smithsonian Institute; and to show that the present time seems to call imperiously for a serious consideration of the unsettled condition of opinions on the causes of the present agitation.

The political, moral, and even the religious state of the world seems to be revolutionary. The late convulsions on the continent of Europe, and the various utopian speculations and wild schemes of the reformers who vainly expect to remedy, with railway speed, all the complicated errors and evils which have come upon us during the lapse of ages. The Encyclopedian Philosophers of the last century, stimulated, perhaps, by the American Revolution, and forcibly led to a serious consideration of the growing evils of society which seemed to threaten the existence of society itself, have shed, by their labors, so much light on the radical causes of those evils, that the secret could no longer be kept from the suffering multitude. At the same time the abuse of religion whose unworthy professors had been the efficient allies of tyrants—pacifying the oppressed with the promise of treasures in a better world as a compensation for their inevitable misery on earth, began to create doubts on the origin of a religion whose acts were so opposed to its professions.

The French Revolution was a lucid exponent of these facts. Inequality and fraud in the laws became so apparent that none but the blind could fail to see and trace their sufferings to that source. I may almost venture to say, that all the evils of society, present and past, proceed from inequality and injustice in the laws—manufacturing crime itself, through forced and unnecessary poverty. A most interesting lesson may now be learnt from the late publication in France of the statistics of crime, where incipient crime may be seen growing its annual and unvarying crop from circumstances not altogether dependant on the criminals; these statistics point to localities, age, sex, professions, trades, &c., with their influences on certain crimes; each one acting its part with wonderful uniformity. Now, does not this show that there are some radical defects to be looked for carefully; but not touched until we have more light? May not some rays of this light be expected from an institution such as is now proposed for the City of Boston; but not confined in its action and influence to that or any other locality; for, if we take for our guide the true meaning of Smithson, (our inspiring genius,) every inhabitant of this globe must be considered as a co-beneficiary with ourselves, although we have in view the interest of all nations, and our happy country has less need of reform than any other; let us not dissemble our own embryotic condition, and the novel and anomalous government under which we live; the

future of which no man can foretell. How ominous for good or for evil is the destiny of this vast country ; how ominous for evil would be the unprepared separation of these states. I fear not the issue of the great question now agitated. *Interest*—all powerful *interest* will dispose of that question as it did in times of less light in Europe, where slave holders found that good and thrifty tenants were better than bad and lazy slaves. But the unbridled ambition of *penniless* demagogues, we learn from all history, is much to be feared ; order and public good is not their element.

An attempt will be soon made to institute a society for the purposes here glanced at, trusting to its intelligent members to give it a suitable form.

I should not have presumed to suggest, even, a measure so far above my own powers, if I had not often been encouraged by Adams and Webster, who had both promised their aid and patronage. The death of these great men almost extinguished my hopes, but lately a new spark of hope has been kindled by the encouraging words of several of our younger statesmen and philosophers ; and while I am on the bright side of *ninety* (not far off) I will hope still.

Some funds will be necessary if a professorship, foreign correspondence, and premiums for essays, are contemplated. Such an opening for foreign writers, now controlled by restrictions, would be a sort of safety-valve for the issue and diffusion of that *sort* of knowledge so much wanted and so much feared, and will be readily availed of.

If my wishes prove successful, the only honor I can aspire to will be that of a subscriber to the full amount of my humble means. I had hardly mentioned this subject to a merchant of this city, than a very liberal subscription was offered. This gentleman is the founder of a new branch of business, more beneficial than any one ever proposed, giving a new productive value to an element from which commerce had derived so much before.

If I had a voice in the contemplated institution I should propose to solicit no subscriptions, trusting to the well tried liberality of Boston whenever anything useful was proposed. Intellect, which is not always in company with wealth, is most wanted ; and should be courted, rather than kept back by calls for subscriptions ; and I have the pleasure of announcing that liberal donations now wait only for the receipt of the treasurer.

Finding it painful to write in consequence of an old wound, I will make a few extracts from former essays, in the Boston Courier, on the same subject.

ESSAY No. 1.

This republic is an anomaly among nations. Never was there anything like it before; it is the invention of our forefathers, with all the past experience of history in their discriminating minds, with great liberty of choice, and with but few obstructions from olden times, and *vested rights*; they had almost a *tabula rasa* on which theory might figure more freely than was ever before allowed: for all former governments had grown out of consecutive circumstances, over which statesmen had no immediate control. It was thought imperiously necessary *then* to violate common justice, and even the laws of nature, to preserve order, such as it was in old countries—that *semblance of order*, of which they boast. It was considered necessary to debase the poor, to elevate the rich; whereas, the contrary—*Parcere sub-jectis*—was more easy and politic. It was *not* necessary in America to lay the burthens of State with a heavy hand and unequal measure on those who had but little, or to *give to him who hath, and take from him who hath not*. There was abundance for all who would work with head or hand; and the necessary expenses of government were too small for any one to shirk his just share of them. Legislators were not obliged to tax severely their wits for the ways and means of raising a revenue by indirect and invisible taxes.

Even to this day our taxes are comparatively so light and just, that this is the only country on earth where may be observed, once a year, a scramble, and almost battling at the treasury office for a chance to pay the taxes. Thus, though great merit be due to our wise forefathers for the good government we live under, we must acknowledge that they were highly favored by circumstances. Moses and Solomon, Solon and Socrates, Pythagoras and Plato, Montesquieu, Bacon, and the whole host of modern statesmen, would have been sorely puzzled to frame a *practicable* constitution which would give to the French people the measure of liberty and justice which we enjoy in America. The wisdom of the renowned sages would find in France no *tabula rasa* on which to inscribe their laws. That whole nation is

covered over with a mass of unintelligible hieroglyphics borrowed from Egypt, Greece, Rome, and the feudal ages; civil and religious codes confounded, the *higher* and the *lower law* disputing for precedence. When will law makers understand the impossibility of harmonizing things irreconcilable, the laws of nature and high human civilization, as it is understood by Guizot, and in spite of the prescriptions of Montesquieu, Bacon, Mansfield, and other writers, who tell us authoritatively that the laws of society must not be in opposition to nature? All that we can hope for, is to approach so near to that *desideratum* as to make the civilized world a little more habitable.

Some wise statesmen have told us that the error of theologians of all times, has been the attempt to make Olympus and the gods *possible existences*. Let them take a lesson out of their own book, and not endeavor to make this imperfect thing called society, a perfect thing like nature. Give us a fraction more of equity every century, but do not recede an azimuth. This is the only language I preached to my democratic friends, and wrote in their papers when they did me the honor to admit me into their councils some years ago; few of them agreed with me, many did not understand me, and called me *slow team*, old foggy, and cried "go ahead." They saw the rapid progress which they were making in the arts and physical sciences, and vainly thought that the laws which govern society might be made to go ahead at the same pace.

They are now trying to spur on this *slow team* with their own goads, and will soon find that the road is not yet in a condition for any greater speed. The road in Europe is in a still worse condition. Look at the moral and physical condition of the people of France; look even into their legislative assemblies, in which may be found some of the wisest men in the world, and then ask what progress they have made during the last sixty years. They have made some, I admit, for I have seen it; they have discovered some of the stumbling blocks in their way—*ignorance* and *impatience*, especially.

I think we too, are making some progress in America, and if we are not made giddy by the locomotive speed of our material and commercial prosperity, and can spare a little time—were it on Sundays after church, even—to cast up our political accounts, and balance loss and gain, we may be safe; and this last remark leads me naturally to the subject I had in my mind when I sat down to write. It is a very important subject, which I have urged often and long in our papers; but as yet hear no response to my urgent call. The "spirits will not come from the vasty deep," to the call of so feeble a voice.

I know more than one man in Boston whose voice would be heard on so important a subject, but how shall I inspire them with the courage for so great an undertaking. It is great certainly, but the materials are at hand, and the workmen are equal to the task; it requires but a judicious beginning, as in mathematics. One step at a time, securely made, will carry you to the top of Jacob's ladder. I have said that the materials are at hand, and the workmen prepared for this *opus magnum*. Our country is the richest in hopes, and the happiest on earth; the inhabitants the most able, ever assembled, to know what they want. Our learned men are well informed on the errors of other countries and times, as well as on our own; these errors have not been fruitless, nor are they likely to be repeated and perpetuated; our *interest* alone, when better understood, is an unvarying cynosure for our lawgivers. That important word for just rulers, is a touchstone more sure than mawkish sentiment, or even individual humanity. The government of a nation is like that of the universe; it should be impassible and know not individuals; the citizens have delegated no power to rulers save that over *interest*, and even that is to be used with great discretion.

Look at the abuse of legislation and government in France, now, and before the Revolution. Not a hogreeve could be appointed in the remotest department of France but by the great central power in Paris; and six hundred thousand civil agents, as well as the military, must apply to Paris for their commissions. Shall we follow in their track, *however slowly*, or shall we continue in the safer path which our wise men have made for us? Without spending too much time on a thousand such questions, which might be usefully asked in an elaborate treatise, I will ask one more simple question, leading directly to the object I have in view. Shall we leave the order, the method, the system so necessary in every great enterprise, and more especially in the organization of a new government, entirely new in its construction and principles, to chance;—a government soon to be for the most extended and populous and active race of men the world has ever seen?

Need I go out of the history of the United States for a proof of this postulate? If our Constitution, one of the best in the world, were now to be made with the same certainty as we now have of vastly extended domain, and with the same conflicting interests, would not common prudence command some forecast, and *speculative* provision for the ominous future of our happy country? I say *speculative*, and ask no more. If the framers of our Constitution had enjoyed the advantage of a speculation *ad hoc* by a few wise men years before their great work was done,

might not that excellent Constitution have been still better? In my next, I shall endeavor to show that such speculations are now required, and cannot be too soon agitated, by an assembly of a few wise men whom I have in my mind.

FRANKLIN.

ESSAY No. 2.

We learn from Cicero, that Socrates preferred to all other studies that which concerned morals, and that he was the founder of the Moral Philosophy of the Greeks. Now, as we know that he was a politician as well as a moral philosopher, I can see no other means by which he could promote his favorite object than through the laws. I have often alluded to this subject before, and have found no reason to alter my opinion; and I quote this high authority in support of it. Bad laws make bad citizens; laws useless, trifling, uncalled for, and laws of very difficult or impossible execution are bad laws. Laws which increase poverty—the mother of ignorance and crime—as all laws do which lay unequal and heavy burthens on the laboring classes, and facilitate monopolies, especially of land, as in France before the Revolution, and in England now, are of this class. It matters not how slow this process may be, even in this our happy country; the end will ever be the same, as we learn from the history of fallen nations.

We observe in the labors of philosophers of every age and country; from Asia and Egypt, through Greece and Rome, down to this fair and promising America; from pure Christianity to Christianity corrupted and abused, that laws and politics stand prominently in the foreground. Why was it so, if political philosophers were not convinced that individual morals, and national peace and prosperity, could be promoted by no other means than by just and impartial laws well executed? Is it not then wonderfully strange that every other science but politics and religion should have made so much progress, and they so little? I would fearlessly ask—were these philosophers and theologians *honest*, or did they misunderstand each other? When they met was it to seek for the truth, or for the purpose of personal triumphs? The dialogues between Socrates and Antiphan, Aristophanes and his other opponents, would seem to settle this question.

I have included Religion among the backward sciences; and my authority would be considered high enough (Bacon) if facts were not higher. Bacon asks "why the civil state should be purged and restored by good and wholesome laws every third and fourth year by Parliament, devising remedies as fast as time breedeth mischief, and, contrawise, the ecclesiastical state continue upon the dregs of time and receive no alteration?" Bishop Berkley says that "there is no place under the sun where false swearing on duties and religious matters so much abound as at Oxford." (I quote from memory.)

All the great achievements we read of in history originated in single minds, or with a few wise men united, and not perplexed or controlled by public or private cares. The ancients had not the great advantage of a public press, and their labors were confined to a few patriotic philosophers and poets who sang or said their wise lessons in the public places, and were listened to by ambitious scholars greedy of knowledge and fame. The Peripatetics, as their name indicates, were the sowers of the seeds of knowledge on the highway; and fortunately it has not all been trampled under foot, but much has come down to us, in spite of dark intervening ages, and sinister opposition. The independent schools of philosophy, which were ruinous to their professors, have proved a blessing to succeeding generations. These professors were poor and persecuted, but courageous and independent. Theirs must have been true wisdom, or it could not have survived such powerful obstacles. See what miracles of reformation were achieved by a single man in Jerusalem, and a few humble followers, without political station or pecuniary influence — poor uneducated men; but men with a steady purpose, and that, a truly philanthropic purpose — intelligible to the meanest capacities.

Now, to come down, with fearful bathos, from such men and such purposes to our little city of Boston and our comparatively little men, let me say I have heard one of our most renowned politicians and pleasing orators say, that three men united in purpose, with a good cause and perseverance, could rule this nation — meaning, I presume, put us in a way to rule ourselves wisely. Now, if from what we have seen in the revolutions of nations, and from what we now see in our great social experiment in these States, we believe that such a power exists and is now dormant; is not the bare statement of these facts enough to awaken a few wise and good men in this city of boasted science to a sense of their duty? What is asked of them? merely to institute a little society of a dozen independent men of leisure; not to eat and drink, or play billiards, or calculate the chances of

rise or fall of stocks, or the relative truth of the Catholic and Protestant Bible; but how to preserve and improve this Union. If such an assembly could merely approach this important problem, although they might not live to enjoy the benefits of their labor, their names would go down with that of Washington to the latest posterity with high honors. They would abjure all active politics, local or sectarian interests, and confine their thoughts and labors to immutable principles, and then endeavor to find speculatively how near it is possible for legislators to approach to that ideal perfection of government prescribed by Bacon, Mansfield, Blackstone, Montesquieu and the host of encyclopedists.

They would not be discouraged by the apparent impossibility of making all the laws of polished society identical with the laws of nature; although the great men alluded to above have told us that no human laws should be in opposition to the laws of nature. But they would persevere in the design of making society as perfect as possible. Aiming too strenuously at the impossible, is so much time lost for the practicable. A little independent speculative and consulting society; a little independent private *Areopagus* in the city of Boston, viewed on a small scale, and of temporary utility, might prove to be a very useful and cheap source of consultation, if we should have again in the State of Massachusetts a legislative assembly, principally composed of tyro-legislators, to instruct them (if desired) on the fit and useful subjects of legislation, and the wisdom of leaving to the course of events such as cannot be meddled with, in the present state of society, with any advantage. I have lost, and I regret it much, a list of a large number of useless, injurious and impracticable laws, proposed or enacted by the ever-changing government of France, during a residence in that country of fifteen years; and also some conservative legislation in Spain of a very different character, which I witnessed during a residence of several years, long ago, in that beautiful but unhappy country. Such a list would be highly appreciated by an institution such as I have now in my mind, which could be referred to on the occasion for the instruction of inexperienced law-makers.

I can see some difficulties in the way of such a self-created institution, but none insurmountable.

In a former article I have alluded to the emasculation of one of the most promising establishments in Europe (the class in the Academy for Moral and Political Philosophy) by a late act of Napoleon III. What a glorious opportunity this is for old Boston, for Young America to restore the lost Pleiad to its bereaved Galaxy!

FRANKLIN.

ESSAY No. 3.

Now, shall Boston have the honor of instituting even on a small scale,—a class on Moral and Political Philosophy in anticipation of the final destruction of that promising institution in France—repudiated by Napoleon the First, and now a bugbear to his successor. That institution contains now some of the truest and most enlightened men of Europe who would joyfully, no doubt, open to us the treasures of their past labors, and encourage us with their past hopes.

Let one man among us, whose opinions would command respect, say YES, and the thing is done. Let him name his colleagues, not too old or too young, and in circumstances as independent as possible of local, corporate, or sectarian antecedents. I think I could point my finger to the man, and say with confidence, *Ecce Homo*. Such a man would probably invite two friends, in whom he had confidence, to his house for conference, open the subject modestly and briefly; for, in fact, it lies in a nutshell, although it would soon develope *world-wide*. This enlightened triumvirate would dispassionately and disinterestedly look upon the world as it is, make every allowance for a false beginning, doubt of everything till proved—like Bacon and Descartes—doubt even of God's having implanted the seeds of evil in man; they would find human evil enough no doubt, but their special business would be to seek for its *real* source, which they would find in the laws, written and unwritten—laws of circumstance rather than of principle, and of course changing with circumstances, but not always on principles of justice. They would not be so rash as to advocate the repeal of all or many of the existing imperfect or bad laws; this must be the work of time, as their accumulation has been. To acknowledge our faults is the first step to reform. To trace the origin of bad laws to their source, show that source, and expose the evil consequences of such laws, their workings, and their prolific tendency;—this is all that is required of a self-instituted council of patriotic sages; this would be the first and important step to political reform. Such an assembly need not be numerous—it had better be other-

wise ; — unobtrusive, sitting quietly on its sacred tripod, always inspired for good counsel, and ready to impart its oracle, like the Pythoness, to those who want counsel.

I have had hopes ever since the noble bequest of Smithson to this country, (the only one he could trust,) for an institution which appeared by its tenor to embrace the object I now presume to lay before the wise men of Boston. But, those hopes have nearly vanished, and if they fail here, on the humble scale now proposed, I must conclude that my suggestions are useless or premature, and console myself with the hope that the same idea will at some future time be suggested by some one of more influence. In humble imitation of Columbus, I shall have knocked at two doors without being heard. I can knock but little longer ; for mind and body remind me that my end is near. I would be allowed, in this personal allusion, to say that I have no ambitious or individual interest in these often repeated suggestions ; I can neither hear nor make myself heard, if I were otherwise qualified to be a member of so important an institution.

I have alluded in the last paper to the *cheapness* of the institution as an objection ; and if such a thing, with a suitable programme were proposed to the munificent citizens of Boston, I may conclude from what we have seen that thousands would be subscribed, and we should have a splendid school for moral and political science, in which such men as Mignet, Cousin, Thiers, Guizot and Comte would be glad to be honorary members — perhaps some of them would follow the steps of the learned Agassiz, and take up their abode among the literati of our quiet Cambridge.

But money cannot achieve the herculean labor of voiding this Augean stable of its impurities — it must be a labor of love and of time. The longer it is deferred the greater will be the load to remove. Half a million of dollars have been bequeathed by a philanthropic stranger to the most independent and richest nation on earth, for this express purpose, and it has signally failed. We learn from the history of all great charities that, almost without an exception, the intention of the donor has been evaded ; and we need not leave our own country to point out a signal failure, so far as the fair and honest employment of the bequest is concerned. The Girard College is a conspicuous monument commemorating this fact ; and if Smithson were to revive and visit Washington, he would look in vain for evidence that the spirit of his will had been complied with, and be astonished that so many wise men had not been able to understand an instrument which he endeavored to make perfectly intelligible by the most sententious arrangement of words he could frame. He was aware that

we had well endowed schools for every art and science known in Europe, but *one*, and that the most important one, and the more so in his estimation, because he had seen that in every part of the world, that the science of government—glanced at by ancient philosophers, with the hellebore or ostracism staring them in the face—unveiled, in a degree, by the necessity which the Vattels, the Burlamacquis, Grotius, and other publicists were under, in writing on public law, to dive into national principles to establish national rights; but not aware, perhaps, that they were opening Pandora's box, whose mysterious contents might one day be seen and understood by an improving and oppressed people.

Smithson might well suppose from our independent circumstances and our boasting of liberty and social rights, that *Res-publica* really meant in our estimation what those words imply, and that his school would prosper without antecedent obstructions, in a country where there were few or no such obstructions. But there is a ray of hope yet in the old world if the *scientia scientiarum* should fail to find a resting-place in the new world; for I have lately discovered, through the politeness and love of science of a distinguished curator of the Boston Library, two new books recently published, one in France and the other in England, which ought to be in the hands of every American statesman. Yet strange as it may seem, I could not find either of them in our book stores, and was obliged to request the learned and liberal curator alluded to, to procure them; and I believe I have enjoyed the first sight of Comte's "Positive Philosophy" and Gregg's "Political and Social Science." These two books and a few French pamphlets not printed in France, *pour cause*, show that there are yet some few pupils of the school of Smithson courageous enough to risk burning their fingers, or even ostracism, which is still practised in various parts of Europe. Shall we, then, who are invited by the thousands of liberal editors to fill their spacious columns with every speculation which promises the smallest benefit to man and society, decline to examine the thorny paths of past errors? I say emphatically, examine; for I would change nothing, as Talleyrand advised the Bourbon, "but the linen of the imperial bed." Boston and its environs are rich in talent; but we are not confined to any limits when we work for our country and mankind.

I shall hereafter quote from these model books.

FRANKLIN.

ESSAY No. 4.

If the rulers of the nations of Europe were guided by the true interest of their subjects, or even by their own true and permanent interest, they would wish to see these States united, peaceful and prosperous. A small knowledge of political economy and the interests of commerce would teach them that nations are commercially solidary, and that the prosperity of one conduces more or less to the prosperity of all. How little benefit have commercial nations derived heretofore from Turkey and the Barbary States, and less from China, considering its population, and nothing from Japan as yet. It is not difficult to prove that there is a common interest among nations, and that the late destruction of men and materials in the Crimea is a common loss for the republic of nations.

This is the material view of the subject; now let us examine the moral and political question which now agitates the world, and which no human power can arrest, or keep out of sight. That terrible book—the Bible, which some despotic rulers have suppressed—*wisely* for personal and temporary interests, has opened the eyes of oppressed nations, and is now so multiplied that its light can no longer be hidden “under the bushel;” and the intrepid schoolmaster is also abroad, and his ruler will eventually rule the world. Some despotic rulers have been aware of this dangerous progress, and not being able to stop it, have, like Prussia and some other German States, attempted to give it a direction which would spare them a little while longer, and make their fall more gradual. They have accordingly taken the schools into their keeping, appointed teachers, prescribed what shall be taught, and what omitted. The Abbé Fresinard, in the Council of Charles X., in 1822, proposed to prohibit public lectures on ethics and political economy in French, and allow them only in Latin, lest the common people of France should become too wise for their masters. The present Emperor of France, not daring to suppress the class of the Academy on moral and political science—or dismiss any of its accomplished but obnoxious members who are opposed to his rule, has added

ten new members of his own choice. English history affords several acts for the same purpose, and the Bible alludes to a similar policy; but all in vain—*c'a ira, c'a ira*; knowledge can never retreat, but will go on conquering and to conquer.

Knowing all this as the rulers or their ministers do, it would be wise for them to let America try experiments on government, *at a respectful distance*; and it would be equally wise for America not to make too much haste in this difficult and dangerous process.

If some European rulers, flushed with the late success against a mighty power, should unwisely, through fear, which is a bad counsellor, attempt to meddle with our concerns, and seek to sever this Union, and succeed, (which is next to impossible,) it would be for them the most fatal measure they ever accomplished. They may complain, with truth, that our example and our progress in political reform, has opened the eyes of their oppressed subjects, who will not suffer such oppression much longer. But if they succeeded in sowing the seeds of disunion here, the light which they fear so much would burn all the brighter amid our troubles, and we should gain more knowledge by our sufferings, and finally re-unite stronger than ever, and their invading hosts would go home laden with new knowledge, as the French, Spanish and Hessian soldiers did at the close of our revolution. It is wise to temporize with a moral as well as a physical enemy, who cannot be conquered. America is the exponent of the former, and bids fair to become so of the latter, if meddled with. Despots should be careful and not disturb the sleeping lion, or meddle with the schoolmaster. The world is just now beginning to learn the power of the latter. Heretofore, the experience and wisdom of nations was, in a manner, lost for their successors; but now the mighty press, steam power and the telegraph speak all languages, and go to all nations, so that he who runs may read. Then the rapid increase of commerce—that civilizing and humanizing power—is breaking down the old barriers which sundered peoples, and made the words stranger and enemy synonymous.

Nations as well as men are learning that it is unprofitable to quarrel with customers. Peace will become more fashionable, as well as more profitable; the late long peace has been a more fruitful lesson to kings than all the rhetoric and eloquence of all the peace societies in the world. *Interest*, well understood, is beginning to make itself understood even in imperial courts. Luxurious despots have been reading political economy, and have learnt that one live man is worth more than a dead one, and can administer to their wants much more effectually by

making food for man by their labor, than by feeding the earth with their slaughtered bodies. Europe was never so rich and prosperous, and kings' coffers were never so full as during the late long peace, and we, the youngest of nations, have the glory of having given to our seniors a practical lesson which they will understand to be far better for their security and prosperity than the insidious counsel of Machiavelli. We have but to look at the late commercial reform in Europe to be proud of our own policy. Now, may we not hopefully expect, that the American schoolmaster will not allow his foreign pupils to become wiser than himself; for *indeed*, there are certain symptoms, quite discernable, in the writers and rulers of some of the wisest of foreign nations, which show a progress in the science of commerce and manufacture, which we may well emulate.

I cannot think, however, that with the many obstacles now in their way, they can make such progress as we *may* in the abstract science of political morals. We will give them the benefit of our experience, not forgetting how much we owe to the *written* wisdom of many of their statesmen and philosophers; we will do much which they cannot do; we will test with prudence and caution such of their theories as comport with our happy circumstances, and promise success; and when our wise men have leisure to take off their admiring eyes from the flattering prospect of our past and present success, and strive to consolidate it by that method which alone is the soul of every great enterprise, by that profound and philosophical study which will throw a blaze of light into their counsels, then we may have hope of lasting progress, and have no fear of retrocession.

There is much scattered wisdom in the American people, more than was ever before seen on earth; but it wants concentration. Our State Legislatures and Congress are giving us yearly lessons, no doubt, active, passive, and negative; but local and personal interests absorb so completely their thoughts and their labors, that they have no time to study the great chart of our present voyage and future destination. We learn from the best British writers, that the same want is felt there, and that with their fifteen ministers there is more labor for them than they are able to perform well. Much of their time is wasted in defending themselves from personal attacks, and in promoting the interested measures of clients on whom they depend for their places. Now will it be said that our *five* ministers, with a new world, and new systems to provide for, and but little intellectual aid in their *ill paid* subalterns, can have time to philosophize on the spirit of laws and the wisdom of governmental systems? The thing is impossible, and some external voluntary aid is required. Indi-

viduals may cogitate, study, and propose, but we require some focal point towards which their labors may concentrate, and mutually enlighten each other. But *where* is the *initial* man, who has the courage to step out of the ranks, and offer himself for the victim of jealous but impotent sneers, and say: "Come on, follow me — you my equals or superiors; I have courage, as you see, and some strength; let us unite our powers, and they will be the more efficient." Aristotle said that we are apt to undervalue ourselves, and Montaigne's maxim was, that a man may say: "I am wise, brave, and honest." Let us prove all this by thinking what we say, and saying boldly what we think.

FRANKLIN.

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 9999 08600 865 1

AUG 3-0 1927

